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Client systems are groups of students or citizens with a stake in the institution of education, who depend upon it, and who are motivated to take some action in its regard. Teachers comprise a third system with a professional interest in education. Each system is a complex of subsystems or subgroups with contradictory as well as complementary expectations. Growing dissatisfaction with the level of teacher performance is reflected by the increasing struggle for participation in the affairs of schools by the two client systems and the professionals. Recommended school system responses to these pressures include (1) opening up to a consideration of subsystem needs, (2) dealing positively with problems of client system linkages, and (3) utilizing contemporary rational decision making procedures. (JK)

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Trends and Issues in Client Demands and System Responses

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Introduction

One of the most hazardous tasks is to generalize about contemporary events and their meanings for the future. It is even more so in an arena where data are sketchy and situations are as fluid as they are in the domain of client participation. You have heard an interesting and provocative set of descriptions and analyses of school client matters in New York City, Atlanta, Huntsville, and Boston plus student unrest examples in five cities with the pseudonyms of Metropolis, Riverview, Central City, Elmwood and Jefferson. My first responsibility is to speculate (and I would underline speculate) on the basis of what has been reported here (plus data available elsewhere) about trends and issues in client participation. My second task is to speak to the matter of school system responses to client participation.

Professionals and Primary Client Systems

Two primary client systems are involved in the subject of this symposium: students, and the community. The professionals who provide educational services are likewise significant. My definition of a client system is that it is collectivity or group whose members have a stake in an institution, depend upon it for services, are concerned about it, and have sufficiently sharp feelings so that they are motivated to take some action in its regard.

Richard O. Carlson provided a useful framework for thinking and talking about organizational-client relationships.[1] As you may recall from

his chapter in the 1964 NSSE Yearbook he suggested a way of conceptualizing the relationship of clients to an organization. Carlson classified organizations into four types based upon whether there was organizational control over admission and client control over client participation in the organization. The public schools were identified as Type IV, i.e. an organization in which clients have limited control over their own participation in the organization and the organization has little control over client admission. Carlson's framework is useful when we consider members of the community as consumers of public school services and students as clients of the school also consuming its services.

The primary client groups--students and community--are obviously composed of many sub-systems which differ in important ways among themselves. The same is true for professionals. Professionals can be differentiated by position (teacher-administrator) or by specialization (English teacher, elementary teacher) or by role differentiation within specialization (master teacher, teacher-aide). Each of these can be further classified by organizational affiliation or membership (NEA, AFT).

The community client system can be examined in terms of its sub-systems: parent, non-parent; black, white; deprived, elite; educated, non-educated. And each of these can be further divided into other sub-systems.

Similarly the student client system is a composite of hosts of sub-systems: conformists, non-conformists; males, females; blacks, whites; college bound, non-college bound; Afro-Americans, Brown Berets, Black Panthers, SDS'ers--on and on. The point is simple--we are dealing with

a complex, mixed bag, exceedingly dynamic and interactive. To examine one client system apart from the other does not tell the whole story. I would like therefore to speculate briefly about each and then comment about inter-relationships among the client systems and professionals.

Professional System

The power movement on the part of professionals has a longer history and has been much more visible than student and parent power thrusts to date. The Lieberman writings of the late 1950's and early 1960's provided the motivation as well as the blueprint for the current mobilization of power within the professional community.[2] The press for recognition, salaries, participation in significant educational decisions gained momentum in the mid-years of this decade and has by no means run its course. Strikes, sanctions, sick days, teacher boycotts are bound to continue. Similarly strife internal to the professional community is just beginning. The NEA-AFT contest will continue. The relationships between teacher organizations and administrator organizations will remain clouded and tension filled for sometime. The separation of teachers and management will not be easily bridged leading to the development of a parallel management system within teacher organizations functioning at the building and district levels. Over time there will emerge a cleavage between that management system and the teacher force. This schism over a period of years will lead to a coalescing of the parallel management systems into a single unit albeit more closely allied to the teachers than is true at present. The cycling of these events will be accelerated by the prospect of a coalition of pressure

against professionals on the part of students, parents and dissident teachers.

Student Client System

The students (junior and senior high school) represent a massive reservoir of latent power. Most dissatisfied students historically have submitted to the regimen and value system dominant in the institutions they have attended. Carlson identified forms of student adaptation to organizational life; his analyses are very insightful.[3] In light of today's events they even appear to be prophetic. One pattern of student-client behavior which he noted was labeled "situational retirement." It applies to students who are physically present but mentally absent. To quote Carlson:

> He goes to school because to do otherwise is to be shamed; but he takes no part in what is going on around him. He defines the school as a warm quiet place where no one will bother him. He goes to school in a manner similar to the way elderly men go to a library and unemployed men go to the movies.[4]

The second is "rebellious adjustment." This type of client behavior involves the rejection of both the school and what the school has to offer. Such students test the limits of the situation to see how far they can depart from what is expected of them. Carlson comments that this form of adaptation is disruptive to and problematic for the school and the chances of maintaining this form of adaptation over a long period of time are slim. He observes further that "rebellious adaptation" may be a way-station on the road to dropping out of school. The perspective taken by the students is one of seeing the whole situation as a game of wits and the object of the game is to see how much one can get away with.[5]

These two concepts--rebellious adjustment and situational retirement--are most relevant to this discussion. As I interpret Mr. Nystrand's cases,[6] listen to high school students themselves, and read other interview protocols taken around the country I see two or three things happening or at least presenting hypotheses worth testing. One is that there is a joining of forces between the "situational retirers" and "the rebellious adjusters." Furthermore I doubt that large numbers of the present crop of rebellious adjusters are on the way to dropping out. They are now articulating the features of common cause with the "retirers" as is evident in the growing interest in junior and senior high school "out of school" student organizations.

These subgroups of the student client system are the natural target populations for college age SDS'ers who are racing to achieve SDS purposes through alliance with junior and senior high school age young people. College students are a transient population in the sense that they move rapidly through the institution, usually four to seven years depending on whether or not they pursue graduate study. Anarchists and nihilists seeking to extend their impact can do so most productively by recruiting and indoctrinating young people in the pre-college period. This allows them several more years to implant and nurture their values. Thus it is a rather safe prediction that student unrest, violence and milder forms of activism will accelerate, involve more and more students (black and white) and be related frequently to extremists now represented most prominently through the Students for a Democratic Society.

Community Client System

The ground swell of new citizen interest in schools, especially community control, presents a startling new set of problems to institutions. Citizens as consumers of the services of the schools have been relatively passive in the past. Their views about schools were often expressed in approvals or disapprovals of bond elections or tax rate increases. Professionals and laymen alike have tended to interpret those actions as either endorsements of, or dissatisfaction with, the schools and their performance. Voter behavior is obviously one criterion with which school people have measured their effectiveness. But it is clearly an imperfect criterion and could be misleading. It masks the types of satisfactions and dissatisfactions held by sub-systems within the larger community client system.

We are now witnessing vigorous attempts to strike out against school organization by individuals and groups--parent and non-parent, black, white and Spanish American--who seek to achieve a wide range of purposes. Some want action on a private or individual grievance; others want improved political access to the points of decision; others demand large scale shifts in specific policy; still others want complete community control over "their" schools including operational responsibility.

There appear to be differences among parts of the country in how community feeling about schools is registering. Similarly there are variations within regions and among attendance areas. One observation common to all is that professionals are not well prepared substantively,

psychologically or in terms of skills for coping with this new phenomenon. And as professionals they are not prepared to reconcile their own militant efforts with those of the other client systems--students and community.

Interactions Among Client Systems and Professionals

A national task force headquartered at Ohio State completed recently a survey of new forms of citizen participation in thirteen large cities.[7] (All of the members of this symposium were on that task force). One observation based on that analysis is that there are new alliances of interest, latent and manifest, among client systems and professionals or at least parts of each.

For example there are instances of collaboration among student groups and community groups with similar grievances to register against the schools. In some cases dissident and angry teachers are working with students and community organizations out of sympathy for student and parent anti-system feelings.

Recently I attended a meeting of one hundred junior and senior high school students convened for the purpose of raising questions about a recent study of problems facing the Columbus Public Schools.[8] The session was held in a settlement house and endorsed by the staff of that agency. The students who attended were members of a new student rights organization formed outside of the school and without the school system's sanction. The young people who attended were very bright, asked penetrating questions about our study, and were obviously hostile to the "establishment."

Present at the meeting were a few leaders from other adult community organizations as well as two teachers.

We noted similar developments in other cities as we focused on citizen participation. Our antennas were particularly sensitive to the feelings of parents and students toward teachers. Antagonisms directed toward teachers are wide-spread. The clashes exhibited in New York City (e.g. Michael Usdan's presentation) between alliances of student and community groups and teachers will probably appear in many places soon. A junior high school in Denver for example has more recently been the site of sharp conflict between community interests and teacher welfare. Two white teachers were physically assaulted by black students. Boycotts lead by the Black Panthers were countered by teacher demands for protection of the central administration. Adults joined with the students in pressing for the removal of the principal as well as the withdrawal of policemen from the building. The struggle for participation in the affairs of this school brings into sharp relief the interaction among the two client systems and professions. It also is a good instance of parent-student alliance against the establishment including both teachers and administration as targets of community feelings. It offers a further example of teacher hostility and demand directed toward the school system's administration.

In my judgment there will be many more instances of students and community groups ganging up against teachers and administrators. The Denver example is one of conflict essentially at the building level at the moment. The New York City situation which started at a sub-district level

(Oceanhill-Brownsville) very quickly became a district-wide fight between community groups and the New York City unit of the American Federation of Teachers.

These skirmishes turned on many questions and issues but prominent among them is dissatisfaction with the level of teacher performance. Many citizens could care less about power politics. They possess rather modest expectations actually. They would like children to learn how to read. They dislike having to generate power displays in order to make a simple point: "Why are our children failing to learn?"

So widespread is this question that the negotiating items (teacher organization-school board) of the future will undoubtedly include some specifications about learner achievement to protect the parent and society. Performance criteria will probably be inserted into negotiations agreements. What such criteria will be like is still quite indistinct. Similarly parent concern in individual cases may result in mal-practice suits against certain teachers. Individual teachers as well as their professional organizations will be defendants. The teacher will be defending against charges of mal-practice directed toward him. The teachers' organization will be defending against charges of failure to deliver professional services. Legal actions of this sort against teachers are already under way at the college level.

System Responses

How are school systems responding to the pressures generated by professional, student and community client systems? It is difficult to

generalize about system responses without appearing to be hypercritical or denegrating to the institution. Such a posture would be unfair. School people--professionals and school board members--are caught up in a web of contemporary events for which there are few clear solutions. Furthermore the conditions which produced today's circumstances were not for the most part under the control of formal school authorities. That is not meant to exonerate them from the responsibility of searching for ways to improve educational institutions. It is intended rather to relax us a bit on what has become the popular practice of institutional harassment. If allowed to go unchecked it will lead to institutional and organizational genocide which I think few people really seek.[9]

We have witnessed the deterioration of our school systems' capacities to satisfy community or in the larger context society's demands for educational services. The two client systems referred to here have found many vehicles for registering dissatisfaction. The natural response of institutions has been to become defensive and protective. The protective response, withdrawal and isolationistic, produces even more vigorous and aggressive attacks upon the system. Coalitions among client systems form to strike out against the solidarity exhibited through defensiveness.

Openness and Coping Capacity

One natural recommendation to make to school officials is to open up. Another is to become more capable of dealing with problems of client system linkages. In our citizen participation study we made both recommendations and specified how organizational openness and improved

coping capacity might be achieved.[10] Both of these recommendations imply the achievement of expertness that may be extremely difficult to achieve.

There are many tasks and decisions in contemporary organizational life to which the expert cannot bring sufficiently definitive knowledge to guide action. Litwak and Meyer in a recent essay on school and family linkage comment that there are no knowledge bases on such matters as:

> .....how to carry out parental socialization functions that lead to the internalization of achievement orientation in children, the management of marital relations to ease tensions, the assessment of which two candidates would make the better president, the decision to encourage nuclear disarmament, and so forth. There are not only incredibly complex problems involving many inadequately specified variables: they also represent problems in which expert opinions may conflict.[11]

We may be guilty of contributing to self or professional delusion if we imply that there are solutions if we just look hard enough. We may be experiencing a period of social transformation for which there are few useful guidelines. And the best we can hope for ourselves is "intelligent survival." Somewhere between the positions of unfounded optimism and debilitating prophecy of doom must be a defensible middle ground.

Need for Decision Oriented Inquiry

It is clear that we do not have a great deal of research--even in the form of well done descriptive case accounts--of what is transpiring in the arena of citizen participation, student unrest, or parent challenges to educational "establishments." The case accounts of Mr. Nystrand are the only ones I know about which focus on current student militancy at the

junior or senior high school levels. Much more needs to be done on this matter immediately--not for elegant, esoteric "contribution to knowledge" reasons--but for much more pragmatic reasons. Data are needed to provide teachers, administrators, board members and college people (pro or anti-establishment) with insights into these phenomena. Having had close association with extreme militants (black and white), moderate and harshly pro-establishment types for the past several years I would make the case for intensive attention to matters of institutional perpetuation, accommodation and survival. Many methodologies, research strategies and disciplines are required. The search for knowledge which we have stereotypically located in the tranquility and safety of some intellectual sanctuaries won't do here.

The action is fast, vigorous--filled with exhileration for many, with agony for many. The struggles for "a piece of the action" which were only emerging a year ago will reach crescendo proportions before this academic year has run its course. We are only witnessing today the threshold rustlings of what may become a fantastic wave of action and counter action, thrust and parry in the months ahead. If researchers are to play a part, the time is now. Since I have justified further inquiry on essentially pragmatic grounds, I would emphasize that such inquiry be relevant to many interests but especially those of the formal decision and policy makers.

Mixed Scanning Approach to Decision Making

Today's decision personnel (lay and professional) seem to be grasping for what Etzioni labels a mixed-scanning approach to decision making.[12]

It is an approach that is not starkly rationalistic in a Simon sense nor boldly incremental in a Lindbloom sense. Rather it is a blending of both. "Fundamental" decisions are differentiated by Etzioni from small, bit or item decisions. Fundamental decisions ought to be based on essentially rational processes, i.e. gathering of evidence, formulating, weighing and selecting alternatives. Item or bit decisions are set within the larger framework of fundamental decisions and can be made incrementally rather than rationally. To illustrate in the context of today's client anxiety, one fundamental decision (to decentralize a school system) might be based on rather definitive arguments of logic, social and political science conceptual inputs, projected administrative effectiveness plus intensive community client system support for decentralization. The "pre-fundamental" decision history and the "post-fundamental" decision history would be strewn with item or small or bit decisions that may present little evidence of rational decision-making behavior. Bit decisions may reflect intuition, compromise, sell out, arbitrariness, and present time orientation.

A fundamental decision (i.e. to decentralize a large school system) is to some extent the product of a host of other decisions which are essentially incremental in character. It is also the stimulator of hosts of follow-up decisions which are likewise marked by incremental properties.

What would seem to be important in today's fluid decision climate would be a philosophy or theory of decision which would allow the decision maker to formulate his responsibilities as a decision maker in a manageable "framework for deciding" in order to avoid being rendered impotent in the

face of crises. The psychological trauma of feeling that all decisions must be made on rational bases is dangerous obviously. Similarly the belief that all decisions are essentially non-rational and can only be made on the spot and with limited data is equally indefensible. The mixed-scanning approach is more than a compromise. It is an acknowledgement that few small decisions can be made with complete information; similarly it is a recognition that fundamental decisions should have a sound knowledge base.

Summary

Time precludes the development of a satisfactory statement on trends and issues in client demands and school system responses. The phenomena are involved and research evidence upon which to base predictions is diffuse and elusive. One can predict with assurance that the militant postures of student, teacher and community groups will not be modified soon. Conflict between professionals and an alliance between students and community groups seems on the horizon.

To say that the knowledge base is limited from which participants in these events can apprehend a sense of direction is both true and false. There are vast amounts of data relevant to improving our understanding of the milieu in which institutions and their clients relate. But it is unorganized, here and there, and needs to be pulled together. School system leaders are in many cases floundering but we should be restrained in our criticism until those of us in the academic community can lend a hand in charting a defensible course for the future. We can be somewhat helpful if we assist in translating a formulation like Etzioni's into the school context so that it is available to the practitioners who are interested.

Footnotes

[1]Richard O. Carlson, "Environmental Constraints and Organizational Consequences: The Public School and its Clients" in Daniel E. Griffiths ed. Behavioral Science and Educational Administration. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964 Yearbook NSSE, Chapter XII, pp. 262-76, 1964.

[2]See especially Myron Lieberman, The Future of Public Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

[3]Carlson, op.cit.

[4]Ibid., p. 274

[5]Ibid.

[6]Raphael O. Nystrand, editor, Student Unrest in Public Schools. Worthington, Ohio: Charles A. Jones Publishing Company, 1969.

[7]Luvern L. Cunningham and Raphael O. Nystrand, Citizen Participation in School Affairs: A Report to the Urban Coalition. Columbus: The Ohio State University, Mimeographed, 1968, 116 p.

[8]The Ohio State Advisory Commission on Problems Facing the Columbus Schools, A Report to the Columbus Board of Education. Columbus: College of Education, The Ohio State University, 1968.

[9]In our study of citizen participation we found relatively few people who genuinely wished to destroy the public schools. Cunningham and Nystrand, op.cit.

[10]Ibid., pp. 93-116.

[11]Eugene Litwak and Henry J. Meyer,"The School and Family" in Paul F. Lazarsfeld, William H. Sewell, and Harold L. Wilensky, The Uses of Sociology. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1967, pp. 529-30.

[12]Amatai Etzioni, The Active Society. New York: The Free Press, 1968, Chapter XVII.